

NEWS- RELEASE

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Governor Quinn and OSFM remind parents to promote fire safety to children heading off to college this fall

Proclamations highlight fire safety measures

SPRINGFIELD – Parents of college-bound children are reminded to promote fire safety and awareness as they complete fall 2011 housing contracts in the coming days and weeks. To help jumpstart the discussion, Governor Pat Quinn has proclaimed September as Campus Fire Safety Month and September 22, 2011 as the “LOOK UP! Pay It Forward” Day in Illinois.

Administered through the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM), this campaign exemplifies the state’s commitment to inform college students about fire safety and to prevent serious injuries and fatalities caused by fires.

“LOOK UP! Pay It Forward” Day was created in 2005 by Kathleen Moritz after her 22-year-old son, Tanner Osborn, and two other students died during an off-campus apartment fire in Chicago. The apartment where they were staying had no working smoke detectors. The tragedy inspired state officials to pass legislation last year requiring the installation of sprinkler systems in fraternity and sorority housing units.

“Often with other things on their minds, college students need to be reminded about fire safety and prevention,” said Larry Matkaitis, Illinois State Fire Marshal. “Students and parents need to ‘LOOK UP!’ to ensure that smoke detectors are visible and operational.”

The Governor’s proclamations highlight safety information related to smoke detectors, cooking, use of candles, and electrical outlets used by college students. Once a year, OSFM and LOOK UP! Work in cooperation with Illinois colleges and universities, and Illinois fire departments to help spread the message of fire safety to college students. This year the OSFM and LOOK UP! will be working with DePaul University in Chicago on September 22nd (LOOK-UP, Pay Forward Day) to give free smoke detectors to needy off-campus housing students, and will additionally canvass all off campus housing areas with fire safety information. Over the course of this program, more than 3,000 posters and additional information have been distributed to Illinois colleges and universities.

The OSFM will again be distributing LOOK UP! posters to Illinois colleges and universities, fire departments, and high schools. Those interested, please send an email with the number of posters needed, name, agency, mailing address and phone number to Jessica Blackford at Jessica.blackford@illinois.gov.

To obtain information about fire safety and prevention, please visit www.state.il.us/osfm or www.nfpa.org.

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